

CHAPTER XIII.

The hired man proved a valuable assistant. He was thoroughly conversant with all the various avocations of the farm, and made himself so useful that Aunt Harris styled him a perfect treasure. Everybody about the homestead liked him, except the dog. Ellen could not help but remember that a stranger had, long years before, excited just such a feeling of animosity in her good old Bouncer as this man had aroused in her present canine protector, and it was not without some strange forebodings that she regularly shut him in his kennel for the night. But her apprehensions seemed ill founded, as morning after morning found Grundy alive and well, though no amount of coaxing could induce him to be friendly with Henry Jones.

Grandfather D'Arcy returned from the Legislature disappointed about his pet schemes. He had thrown all his waning energies into a railroad enterprise, which had been defeated after very spirited debates, and the excitement had proven too severe for his physical constitution. Month after month he kept his bed, never contented in his waking hours when Ellen was out of his presence. The close confinement of the sick room proved very wearisome and irksome to a bright young girl who had all her life enjoyed the free range of the woods. She grew pale, spiritless and pre-occupied, spending much of her time with her face in her hands, dreaming out vague uncertainties.

One evening the winter winds were howling round the house and walling through the key-holes, making the night hideous without, while the cheerful chamber fire within sent a glow of oriental splendor through the air and over the richly curtained bed where the sick man lay dozing.

Ellen looked mechanically out of the window and saw a man, muffled to the eyes, alight from a sleigh and place a bundle on the broad, high gate-post. The man evidently was not tall, for he tiptoed to place the package on the post. This done, he glanced hurriedly around him, and as if sure of having been undiscovered, drove rapidly away.

Grandmother D'Arcy, worn with watching, sat in her great arm-chair asleep.

Ellen threw a shawl over her head and made her way through the blinding snow-drifts to the gate-post, where, by tiptoeing, as did the man who had placed it there, she reached and grasped the bundle which had awakened so much eager curiosity in her brain.

"I do believe this is some sort of a message from that old ghoul. I felt that it must be no one else who brought it here. It's well for his interest in the D'Arcy estate that I did not meet him face to face," she uttered, under her breath. "I do wish I dared to open it. Let me see! Here's a wrapper of strong brown paper and a red seal with grandfather's name around it in old Killingsworth's hand writing. Ellen Dowd, you're a lucky bird! I'll see what this precious bundle contains!" Then, as if overcome by a sudden twinge of conscience, she added hastily, "But I must not break a seal that does not belong to me."

"Ellen, Ellen D'Arcy, daughter mine, come to me!" commandingly called the old man from the chamber, in a weak though startled voice.

With a fluttering heart the young girl obeyed the summons, bearing the package in her hands.

"What have you there for me, my daughter?" and the old man nervously stretched forth his arms.

"I have a singular looking package, sir. Somebody left it on the gate-post."

"Did you go out through the snow to fetch it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You may break the seal and open it for me. But stay! I guess it's private business. Go to bed now, child, and get a good night's rest."

Ellen could not but do as she was bidden. But the contents of that mysterious bundle puzzled her brain for many a weary day.

After she had retired the old gentleman, in a petulant voice, called out for "mother."

Mrs. D'Arcy, startled from her sleep, stealthily sought his bedside.

"What's there something here of more than ordinary interest," handing her the package. "Break that seal and let me know the worst or best at once."

"Is it something about your railroad interests, father?"

"How should I know what it is?"

Mrs. D'Arcy tremulously broke the seal. Around the outside of an inner casket was a letter of a dozen closely written pages.

"This letter is from Killingsworth, father."

"Then give it to me!" he shrieked, "and leave the room this minute. He and I have business that concerns nobody but ourselves."

"Is it anything that troubles you, my dear husband? You know that if you have any serious annoyance it is not right for you to bear it alone. I am here, thank God, to share your sorrows or your joys."

"I must control my own affairs, woman!"

an! Leave the room! I'll ring for you when you are wanted."

Once alone in his chamber, the old man moved the carefully shaded lamp so as to throw the light in a full glare upon his pillow and proceeded to read the letter. Deep groans and hisses occasionally escaped him, but he read on to the end, and then, as if nerved with superhuman strength, he arose from his couch, which for many weeks he had not left without the aid of his strong hired man, and going to the grate, thrust the manuscript between the bars. He then tottered back to the bed and, falling heavily upon it, broke forth in piteous wails of anguish.

"Lost! Ruined! Undone!" he ejaculated, wringing his hands and trembling in every limb.

Mrs. D'Arcy stood listening at the chamber door, her heart beating in audible thumps and a feeling of impatient desire to rush to her husband's bedside almost overpowering her.

Clasping the little casket, the old man proceeded to open it, and taking therefrom a lot of costly jewels, held them between his eyes and the light.

"Ha! ha! ha! These are grand indeed. Just the things to captivate a maiden! Wife, come here!"

Glad indeed to hear the summons, Mrs. D'Arcy was instantly at his side.

"See, mother! see what a lot of costly jewels! Don't you think Ellen will be willing to marry Killingsworth immediately if she can by so doing command such jewels as these?"

"Does the man ask marriage of her, father?" and the poor old lady stood shaking as if in an ague fit.

"Ask it, woman! He demands it! She must marry him, or we will all be driven out of doors. He has me in his power. I played high games with him. I lost. He won. We are all in his power, and nothing but the sacrifice of that poor child can keep a roof over the stricken heads of the D'Arcys."

"Do you then really consider it a sacrifice for Ellen D'Arcy to marry that man?"

"Did I ever say that I thought it was anything else, woman? That man had me in his power, or I should have never thought of making such a bargain. You thought I was crazy. I was mad, but not from the cause you mention. It was because I could not help myself."

"My precious husband, let me be your counsellor. Perhaps there is some loophole of escape."

"You know nothing about it, woman; nothing at all, I tell you. I lost heavily at the gaming table."

"O, my husband! Anything but that!" and the poor, stricken wife bowed her head in her wrinkled hands and shuddered. Then, as if a new idea gave her courage, she exclaimed, "Gambling debts are not legal ones! He cannot compel you to pay such a debt! But oh, how could you?"

"Hush, I say! I've suffered enough already, and will not bear reproach from you. I borrowed money to pay debts of honor, and that man is my surety. He will cancel all my obligations if I will cede to him the whole of the D'Arcy possessions and with them the jewel of my heart, my darling Ellen."

"But in that event what would become of us?"

"We would remain here with our child."

"And him! O, father!"

"I tell you that we must endure it, wife."

"But how did you come to get into such habits, dear? You know I never could have believed it possible that you should be guilty of such conduct if you hadn't told me so yourself."

"You don't know anything about the temptations that surround a politician, wife. I was induced to play in the effort to win money to carry out some very important schemes. I was at first successful, and then luck went against me."

"As it always does."

"Yes, yes, as it always does. I might have known it, but then you were not with me, wife. A man is often but a baby in his efforts to resist temptation when he is alone. You won't despise me, will you?"

"Despise the lover of my youth, the husband of my lifetime, the father of my child? Oh, husband, you don't know what you are saying when you ask me such a question!"

The poor man wept like an infant.

"Call Ellen, won't you?" he asked, at length.

"Why, father, it is almost midnight. Let the poor child sleep."

But Ellen had heard all. She had entered unperceived, and stood crouching behind the heavily curtained bed while the confession was being made, and now, hearing her name called, she slyly disappeared, and rushing through the corridor and groping in the darkness, through the wintry air, while the loud winds tolled out the wails of the storm spirits, she gained her chamber and, hurriedly unrobing, sought refuge behind the ice-cold sheets, where, shivering like a frightened deer, she lay until morning, without for an instant losing herself in sleep.

The D'Arcys were not early risers, but Ellen this morning was astir before daylight. Groping her way to the kitchen, she was surprised to find Henry Jones and Aunt Harris sitting before a blazing fire of logs.

Ellen's long confinement in the sick

chamber of her grandfather had interfered with much of her contemplated companionship with her former friend, but she now advanced to meet him with an earnest greeting of welcome.

"Henry, to you and Aunt Harris I have come for counsel. That old ghoul that isn't worth 'killing' has demanded the whole of the D'Arcy estates as his financial right. He became my grandfather's surety for an immense amount, and to satisfy the obligation my paternal guardian has resolved to marry me to him without the four years' grace that were nominally in the bond."

"Well, Miss D'Arcy, what is your proposed plan of action?" earnestly asked Henry Jones.

"That is just what I should like to know, sir. I don't care a straw for the D'Arcy estates, but if by sacrificing myself I can keep a roof over the heads of my mother's parents, I don't know but I ought to do it."

"Stuff and nonsense!" ejaculated Aunt Harris.

"It'll not suit tamely by and see you offered up on such a shrine as that!" said the hired man, excitedly.

"But how am I going to help it?"

"Ellen, will you marry me?" and the stalwart man leaned forward his herculean shoulders and gazed earnestly into her eyes.

Ellen blushed painfully and bowed her head in confusion.

"I can't give you a D'Arcy estate, my dear, but I have strong hands and a willing heart."

"I do not love you, Henry Jones."

"You will learn to love me, I am sure. I have told you that I am not exactly what I seem. Become my wife and I will tell you all."

"Henry Jones," and the slight form grew proudly erect, "you must not talk matrimony to me, even under the great temptation to escape my present peril, unless you tell me who and what you are."

"Do you then give me any reason for hope?"

"Tell me your history and see."

"Will you promise to keep my secret well?"

"Yes, if Aunt Harris can be a listener."

"Then Aunt Harris may listen. My name is Peter Dowd."

Ellen started and gave a slight scream.

"That was my father's name," she said.

"Is it possible that you are a relative of his?"

"Aye, and of yours too, my jewel. Our fathers were cousins. They belonged to decayed Southern stock—all of them too proud to work and for several generations too poor to live without employment. I was brought up a poor, proud young man, without expectations. The first real hard service I ever performed was on this farm. I ran away from home to find a place where it was not considered disgraceful to work. I assumed the dress of a rough laborer, chewed tobacco like a fool—no wise man would do so—and as good fortune would have it, you were my first and only employer."

"Yes, I remember," replied Ellen, speaking slowly, and then a gleam of momentary amusement flashed across her face. "Remember, too," she added, "that one of your express conditions of acceptance was that you were not to be teased by a woman?"

"Didn't I waive that objection finally?"

"Yes, I believe so," bowing her head upon her hands.

"Miss D'Arcy, Ellen Dowd, look at me. I stand ready to avert a fate from which your innocent soul recoils. You are about to be sacrificed on the altar of mammon; about to receive the embraces and caresses of an object you loathe, a man who cares only to possess you, regardless of your own happiness. I am ready to protect you. Unfortunately for both of us, I am as poor as you will be when that old villain claims this fine estate as his own. As I have no money, I can offer you no legal protection except marriage. I am willing to work for you—to live for you. Once more, will you be my wife?"

"And my grandparents—must I leave them to their fate?"

"Your mother left them thus."

"And brought herself to misery and want and death. Oh, Aunt Harris, advise me! I know not what to do!"

and the poor child burst into tears.

"I'm sure I don't know how to advise you, child. We married—my man and I—because we loved each other; and I don't know how to advise people who don't take love into account," replied the woman.

"But, Aunt, listen. Shall I stay here and marry—ugh!—that abominable, snake-creeping creature of humanity and make my life a constant immolation upon the altar of hate, accepting as a compensation this home for my grandparents, which would be a hell to me; or must I take this man, my kinsman, whom I do not love—though I respect him—to be my wedded husband and accept with him a life of poverty and toil?"

"Your duty is to yourself, poor child. Your grandparents have no moral right to command you. I wash my hands of the responsibility. God knows it troubles me, though."

Ellen raised her slight form to its fullest height, looked long and earnestly at her relative, who studied her features

as intensely as though his life hung upon her decision.

"Peter Dowd, my father's cousin, I will be your wife. God knows I do not want a husband yet for many years to come; but here I am, weak, unprotected, impecunious, with no road before me, except the distasteful one of marriage. Don't I wish I were a man!" and Ellen Dowd placed her hand firmly in the brawny hand of her future husband and raised her head to receive the kiss of betrothal.

"I confess that things don't hardly work to suit me," said Aunt Harris, sotto voce, as she began a clatter with pots and kettles, preparatory to getting breakfast.

When Ellen sought the sick chamber, a load of conscious guilt covered her face with confusion. She had never concealed an act of her life from her grandmother, and now the secret that preyed upon her heart almost overpowered her.

"How did you rest, grandfather?" she asked, timidly.

"Badly enough, my child. Can you guess the contents of that mysterious casket which I received last night?" and the old man looked eagerly into her eyes.

"I haven't tried to guess, grandfather."

"See here, darling. Here are diamonds. They are worth a prince's ransom. All these shall be yours if you will at once consent to fulfill your engagement with—Mr.—"

"You've said enough, grandfather! I shall not consent!" interrupted Ellen, savagely.

The old man arose with the fury of a tiger. Grasping her by the throat, he began to choke her in his frenzy, and she, unable to ejaculate a sound, was in danger of being strangled.

Grandmother D'Arcy screamed for help, and Peter Dowd rushed to the chamber and rescued his affianced wife from the hands of the madman.

Another morning dawned, and Ellen and the hired man had disappeared.

During their few remaining days on earth the stricken couple heard of their beloved grandchild no more.

"Children will do as their parents did before them," commented Aunt Harris. "What is bred in the bone will crop out in the flesh."

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

This department of the New Northwest is to be a general vehicle for exchange of ideas concerning any and all matters that may be legitimately discussed in our columns. Finding it practically impossible to answer each correspondent by private letter, we adopt this mode of communication to save our friends the disappointment that would otherwise accrue from our inability to answer their queries. We cordially invite everybody that has a question to ask, a suggestion to make, or a scolding to give to contribute to the Correspondents' Column.

The following letter speaks for itself. GERVASIS, March 23d.

MRS. A. J. DUNWAY: The undersigned citizens of this place, together with many others, most respectfully invite you to deliver one or more of your popular lectures on the Woman Question, in this place, at some convenient time within the next two weeks, yourself setting the time. We can secure the church for a lecture room, and would suggest the evening as the best time, say at early candle light. We also recommend that you send posters one week in advance to J. C. Hayes, Gervais, who will see that they are properly distributed, that you may have a full house. All of which we most respectfully submit to your consideration.

J. C. HAYES, DR. W. B. MAGERS, W. A. CUSICK, A. S. GLEASON, MARY J. MAGERS, MARY M. HAYES, J. A. SPENCER, MARY MAXWELL,

and the names of forty others, which the New Northwest has not space to publish.

GENTLEMEN AND LADIES: I have the honor to hereby acknowledge your very complimentary letter with forty-eight signatures attached, and will do myself the additional honor to accept your invitation, hoping you may not be disappointed in your expectations when you hear me speak. I would respectfully name Tuesday evening, April 2d, as a time when I can be in attendance at your thriving village. Time (evening), my half past seven o'clock. Thanking you for your manifestation of interest, I am, very respectfully, Yours for the right,

A. J. DUNWAY.

Dr. Van. D. B. Salem: G. W. Lawson, Esq., is our agent in Salem, and will attend to all business for us entrusted to his care.

Mrs. L.: Letter received. Rejoiced at the good news.

Cornelius: Change made as directed. Other letters answered next week.

"Every tree is subject to disease," said a speaker in a Fruit-Growers' Convention. "What ailment can you find on an oak?" asked the chairman. "A corn," was the triumphant reply.

A PICTURE FOR FARMER HUSBANDS.

BY MRS. O. T. DANIELS.

"What does a woman know of hot weather here in the house?" exclaimed a stalwart man of 35, as coming from the hay-field he threw himself down on the bit of rag carpet that partly covered the floor. The wife, who had remarked the exceeding warmth of the day, replied to this exclamation of her husband's only by a slight compression of the lips and a single flash of the mild blue eye; then, holding "baby" in her arms, went on frying doughnuts over the hot stove. Now and then she looked at her bread as it baked in the oven, and turned the apple pie, which were nicely browned for supper and sending a delicious odor through the room. In a few minutes there came from school five hungry, tired children, the youngest only two years old. As she was just out of mother's arms to make room for another, smaller yet, the mother sent her to school with her older brothers and sisters. The craving appetites of the little army are stayed with each a slice of cake, and they go cheerfully out to play, while the mother gets supper for six hired men, who must have their meals regularly in order to get their required amount of work done. What indeed does a woman know of warm weather?

Up at four in the morning and cooking over a hot stove till six in order that the men may have their breakfast betimes; beds to make; rooms to sweep; dishes to wash (cool water in this August); little ones to get ready for school; dinner to get over the same hot stove; baking; washing; ironing; a nice, warm supper for the working men must be well fed; butter and cheese to make, where with to buy the groceries; sewing; mending; mopping—all through July days and August heats! Children to bear and children to rear! How one's heart aches merely to hear the long catalogue of what she must do! No doubt our farmers work hard—too hard. But they are in the open air, under the morning and evening sky—not forever in the same wearisome kitchen. They have but the mild care of the farm animals—not the worrying and fretting association of crying children. It is not possible for men to conceive the nervous apprehension, the baseless but nevertheless real forebodings of evil, and the causeless melancholy, which more or less infest the lives of women while rearing children. All these make the daily toil—hard enough on the bodily frame—even worse on the nerves than the flesh, and the soul breaks down under its burdens.

But how much more sympathetic tones and words, appreciative compliments and kindly attentions from the husband sustain and cheer the overburdened wife! Let not these be wanting, husband, hand-handed but kind-hearted, and you will bind a buoyancy of spirit, a hopefulness and affection in the sharer of your joys and sorrows, that will doubly repay your efforts. Thus may you make happy the wife of your bosom whom before God and men you solemnly vowed to love and protect, and should she be early called from your side you will not have the remorse of conscience caused by neglect of duty. If not, she'll grow yellow and bilious and thin, with her hair falling out and her cheeks falling in. Till death and dyspepsia seize on her prey, and she, in her grave, gets her first holiday.

(From the Iowa City Republican.)

Another Case.

Last week we published a statement of a novel suit brought by a woman in Des Moines to recover damages of a liquor seller for selling intoxicating drinks to her husband, and making him drunk, to the great injury of herself and family. We publish this week the law in full under which that suit was brought. It seems that Des Moines women are not alone in the field. A Mrs. Dowd of Marshalltown was ahead, she having obtained her verdict and judgment for five hundred dollars. Iowa City wives who suffer in want because of the drunkenness of their husbands, do you hear that? Mrs. Dowd's legitimate means of living were on deposit with the liquor seller. She has drawn for it with the above result. Why not you? Why go cold or hungry or illly clad when the law gives you a right to what has been so unjustly taken from you? In Mrs. Dowd's case the seller did not dare appear, and the case went against him by default. The Marshalltown Republican gives the following in reference to the case:

Mr. Henderson, who appeared for the plaintiff addressed the jury substantially as follows:

Gentlemen of the Jury—This suit is brought under the law of 1872, to recover damages for selling liquor to plaintiff's husband in violation of the law. The statute provides that she may recover not only the actual pecuniary damages she has sustained, but exemplary damages; that is, such damages as you think will give her some compensation for the loss of companionship and the support of the strong arm of her husband, the disquiet of the mind and body, and at the same time punish the man for contributing to these unhappy results.

The law can give no adequate compensation for the unhappiness produced by these saloon keepers. But thank God! one law does say that the unhappy wife in such cases shall have some pecuniary compensation and satisfaction.

The evidence shows you that the plaintiff has lost the benefit of the year's support. But how can we estimate the heart-aches for which no compensation is given? It is too late to-night to detain you longer, but I trust that your verdict for the defendant and those who are engaged in the unholy business.

The jury were out but a short time, and returned a verdict for the plaintiff, and assessed her damages at \$500.

[From Harper's Monthly Magazine.] The Woman Question Abroad.

It is singular that in the country of Jane Eyre the woman's movement, as it is called, has a certain solidity which it has not yet attained in this country. Many most eminent Englishmen are not only known as friends and advocates of political equality, but they have urged it upon Parliament; and while the fashionable woman, or woman of society, as she is called in America, is generally indifferent to the subject, if not openly hostile, Lady Amberley, who will, in the order of nature, soon be Countess Russell, does not hesitate to address a meeting in this country in behalf of the equality of her sex. Yet, again, the laws in England weigh more heavily upon women than in this country; and the movement for their political equality usually contemplates the voting of those who represent property.

The most significant recent event in the history of the cause in the United States is the passage of a resolution by the Massachusetts Republican Convention commending the subject to the thoughtful consideration of all citizens.

The president of the Convention, Mr. Hoar, of Worcester, spoke very strongly in favor of the movement in his opening address. It is thus formally introduced to a party platform, not indeed, as a policy, but as a consideration. The effort at recognition, which has been good-humoredly but resolutely laughed down before, has at length been successful.

Such success is emphatic proof of the true gravity of the question in the eyes of many most practical minds, and it is not to be doubted that the subject will command constantly more attention.

Yet is one which by its associations is so easily assailed by ridicule, and is so susceptible of odious misrepresentation, that nothing is more necessary to its friends than the utmost patience and good humor. It is in itself a question of the utmost gravity, but it is not a question of many most practical minds, and it is not to be doubted that the subject will command constantly more attention.

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